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Manitoba and

Canadian North-West.

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AND THE

CANADIAN NORTH-WEST.

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CANADA.

THE NORTH-WEST.—I.*

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

Many of the problems connected with the present condition and prospective development of the Dominion of Canada have a profound interest for the people of the United Kingdom and of the Empire at large. In these problems are involved matters deeply affecting emigration, food and coal supply, trade relations, maritime position, Imperial defence, and communications, and many other questions, which, from a national point of view, are of the first importance. Though the growth of population in the Dominion has not been so great during the last decade as was expected, events are none the less moving fast. This movement, too, is one which, in the very nature of things, must have far-reaching influences.

It does not seem to me an exaggeration to say that the course which affairs take in Canada during the next few years may have a decisive influence upon the direction of British history. The primary reason for this impression is obvious. Canada is the first of the great colonies which has formed a political combination that gives her a position closely akin to that of a nation. Her territory comprises 35 per cent. at least of the whole Empire, and covers nearly half of the North American continent. It is only within the last few years that she has become fully conscious of the vast possibilities of this largely undeveloped area. Facing upon the two greatest oceans of the globe, the country is brought into easy commercial communication and international relation with much of the world. For nearly 4,000 miles it borders upon, and therefore has more or less intimate relations with, the United States. Thus, though Canada has not a nation's franchise, her people and statesmen have to consider in many ways the interests of a nation. By the mere compulsion of circumstances her statesmen are fast becoming statesmen of the Empire. Already more than once their advice has been essential to the wise conduct of the most difficult

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Imperial negotiations. It is this fact which gives such extreme significance to her present position. In what direction will point the interests and aspirations of a great colony which has reached this stage of growth? How far do these interests and aspirations coincide with those of British people generally? These are large questions which cannot be answered off-hand. That they must be answered sooner or later invites or almost compels the careful study of Canadian conditions. England must keep in touch with the thoughts and interests of her children abroad if she is to be to them still in reality a mother land; if she is to be among them a growing rather than a waning influence.

Among the Canadian problems referred to as of national interest I am disposed to place foremost those connected with the growth and settlement of the vast provinces of the North-West. These provinces are sure, sooner or later, to be filled with a population of many millions of people, English-speaking, and for the most part of British blood. To emigrants from the United Kingdom they now offer the most readily accessible areas in the Empire where homestead lands can still be easily acquired. They equally offer abundant lands to those foreign emigrants who are willing to add to the strength of the Empire by adopting British citizenship. The extent to which this process of assimilating energetic and useful material from other races is being carried on in Canada, as in the other colonies, may be strikingly shown by a single illustration. Within the last few years Manitoba and the North-West have absorbed nearly 10,000 of the industrious and intelligent inhabitants of Iceland, who have voluntarily become most useful, loyal, and satisfactory British subjects. This migration is still going on, and it seems not unlikely that a considerable proportion of the population of that interesting island will ultimately be transferred to British soil.

Increasing population in these vacant areas means increased powers of production in directions which intimately concern British consumers. It is only seven and a half years since railway communication was fully established with the North-West, but already wheat from Manitoba farms and cattle from Alberta ranches are finding their way to the English market in increasing volume. Any one who studies existing conditions, who sees how comparatively small is the area as yet occupied, who observes the facility with which production may be increased, will, I think, be convinced that the Great Lakes, the St. Lawrence, and Canadian railway systems will soon be the channels for an immense outflow of food products directed towards Britain. The inevitable pressure of consumption upon production in the United States, hitherto the chief source of British importation, gives peculiar interest to this question of Canadian food

supply ; the filling up, moreover, of these vast territories with an adequate population is almost essential to the complete consolidation of that remarkable, but as yet not fully appreciated, maritime position which is secured to the Empire by the fact that the Dominion rests, with commanding outlook, upon both the Atlantic and the Pacific, where these oceans respectively furnish the shortest and easiest access from the American continent to Europe and Asia. Just as the middle and western States bind New England and the east to the Pacific States, so the filling up of the North-West will complete the cohesion between the Atlantic and the Pacific provinces of Canada.

Wishing to form an estimate of the progress and prospects of the North-West, of its food-producing capacity, and of the conditions of settlement, I elected to visit the country at a season not usually considered favourable. Friends in England and Canada alike reproached me for not planning to reach the prairies in time to see the wonderful prospect afforded by the wide stretches of waving grain. But we know that in all countries not only the promise of spring verdure and of summer growth, but also of early autumn ripening, may be blighted by rain or drought or frost, and so I preferred to visit the North-West in the late autumn and early winter, when the farmer had got down to the bed rock of reality ; when his stacks had been threshed and the grain measured or sold ; when he was preparing to face the winter and was carrying on the operations necessary to make the work of the spring most effective. If such a time for studying a country lacks some elements of the picturesque, it has interest equal to any other, and perhaps more of instruction.

A new and strange sense of vastness grows upon the mind as one travels day after day over the prairies with the distant sky-line as the chief object which fixes the eye. The impression is different from that produced by wide space at sea, for the imagination at once begins to fill up these enormous areas with homes and busy inhabitants. At first sight it seems only necessary to pour out population over these vast spaces in any direction. This is soon found to be a mistake. There are lands good, bad, and middling. Some districts are more subject to frost than others. There are areas where the soil is excellent, but where at some seasons water in sufficient abundance is wanting. There is alkali land in the far West, where the great American desert pushes northward a considerable offshoot. One limited district there is where, from some peculiar configuration of the country, hail is an almost annual infliction ; and where, as in Dakota, the hail insurance companies build up a business. All this is in the midst of an extent of good farming land well-nigh incalculable. In such circumstances the first, second, and third duty of those who would

settle the country is manifestly to reduce the business of land selection as closely as may be to an exact science. To allow any settler in the North-West to go upon land which is not the best available is a gross mistake. The railway companies and the Government are beginning to realize this too long-neglected truth. Lands are now carefully surveyed and their characteristics noted. Skilled pioneers are invited to precede parties of emigrants and make careful choice. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company challenges investigations of its lands and gives free passes to those who wish to examine them with a view to settlement. It sends out experienced agents to assist the individual settler in making a choice. All this is having a good effect, and is correcting the mistakes of earlier days. The trouble taken will be well repaid, for of all emigration agents the contented settler is by far the best. It is from such that the North-West is now getting its best impulse. The steamship in which I crossed the Atlantic was carrying many emigrants, chiefly Scottish, to Manitoba and the Territories. It was satisfactory to find that in most cases they were going on the recommendation of friends who had preceded them. Often in the Far West I met with men and women who were saving their money to bring out relatives, or even, in some cases, going home to induce them to come out. Emigration effected in this way is of the healthiest kind, and is the best recommendation that a country can have.

While the rush of emigration has not been so great as the sanguine hopes of the early settlers led them to anticipate, the progress made seems to the ordinary observer very great. It is, as I have already said, only seven years and a half since the main railway line across the continent was completed. A glance at a good railway map shows how rapidly branch lines have been pushed for many hundred miles in various directions, as settlement justified their construction. What the traveller sees in a journey over some of these branch lines furnishes the best proof of the progress of the country. From Winnipeg I went over the Southern Manitoba road to Estevan, the point to which it was last winter completed, and thence back to rejoin the main line at Brandon, in all a distance of nearly 500 miles. At intervals of 10 or 12 miles over nearly all this distance prosperous little towns are springing up, each equipped with two, three, or four elevators to deal with the grain raised in the surrounding districts. Wheat was being shipped rapidly at the time, and these elevators were usually surrounded by teams waiting to deliver their loads. Huge stacks of straw, soon to be burned for want of any better use, showed where the grain had been threshed in the fields where it was grown. In the latter part of October

the deliveries of wheat at Fort William alone amounted to a thousand car-loads per week, and the railroads were finding it difficult to deal with all that was offered. For 1891 the whole North-Western production was estimated at between 22 and 23 million bushels. A good deal was then injured or lost through the difficulty of dealing with an exceptionally heavy crop in the absence of a sufficient supply of labour. For 1892 the output was between 15 and 16 million bushels, but the average quality was much higher than in 1891, and the crop was generally saved in good condition. For 1893 a reliable report indicates that the aggregate production shows a large increase over 1892. As the yield per acre is not more than an average one, the advance is due to increasing population and a wider acreage. It is from considering these figures and then remembering how short is the time since no wheat for exportation was produced that we get an idea of the rapid change which is passing over the country. The peculiar conditions of cultivation on the prairies make it possible to effect changes in five years which in most countries would require the work of a whole generation. On the Canada Alliance farm, once a part of the large colonization estate in which Lord Brassey is chiefly interested, I saw an illustration of the speedy way in which the virgin prairie can be made ready for a crop. In May, 1890, not a sod had been broken on the farm. In 1892 1,500 acres at least were under crop, with 500 acres additional of summer fallowing. Between June, when the farm seeding closed, and September, when harvest began, a new block of 700 acres was made perfectly ready for the next spring sowing in April. The operations consisted of a first ploughing, in which a very thin sod is turned from the virgin prairie, and then, when this is completed, the back-set, or second deeper ploughing. Careful harrowing follows, after which the soil is as completely prepared for the seed drill as in the best English farming. At an adjoining farm, lately set off from the same estate, 800 acres were ready for seeding where not a sod had been turned the previous spring. It probably costs between five and six dollars (£1 to £1 5s.) per acre to prepare land as thoroughly as that which I examined at Qu'Appelle. I heard of cases where, under a rougher system of farming, land was made ready at much less cost. A man with two yoke of oxen and a gang plough breaks up a quarter section (160 acres) during five spring and summer months, and the whole expense per acre is less than three dollars (12s. 6d.). The rapidity and cheapness of preparation strike the observer forcibly after he has watched the slow processes by which farms are made in the forests of Eastern Canada or British Columbia, in New Zealand bush, among Tasmanian and Australian gum trees, or by reclaiming waste lands in England or Scotland. Manifestly any consider-

able application of capital or a large inflow of farming population might, under such conditions, increase the wheat output very rapidly.

Farms carried on by companies on a large scale are still on their trial in the North-West. Some have proved unremunerative. One of those to which I have referred has begun to pay very satisfactory dividends, and there is no apparent reason why it should be an exceptional case. Everything depends upon honesty and thoroughness of management. The watchful eye of the small owner seems on the whole the most reliable means of stopping leakages, for which there are many opportunities on a large estate, and which are fatal in a time of keen farming competition. On the other hand, great savings are often effected by a sufficient command of capital, in which the company has an advantage over the small farmer. But, whether by large proprietors or small, the North-Western prairies have a capacity for rapid increase of production which might speedily become very great under any exigency of demand.

The North-Western farmer has his special difficulties to contend with. Here, as elsewhere, man learns by slow degrees to wrestle successfully with the problems of nature, and he does so by studying them and adapting himself to new conditions. The key to successful farming in the North-West consists in knowing how to meet the dangers of frost. To this end the farmer must prepare during the autumn for the work of the spring. Abundance of fall ploughing is a necessity of the country. The moment the harvest is off the fields the plough is turned on, and it must be kept at work until stopped by the freezing of the ground. Then with the earliest April warmth seeding may begin at once. Nowhere does the first fortnight of spring count for so much. Farmers once thought it necessary, as in other climates, to wait till the frost was out of the ground to begin sowing. Now they sow when barely an inch or two of ground is thawed, sufficient to allow the seed to be covered. After that the lack of spring showers, very common in the West, makes no difference, for the frost as it thaws furnishes moisture to the roots, while the hot inland sun forces on growth with great rapidity. Thus the frost which threatens the wheat becomes also its salvation. It is under such conditions that the No. 1 hard Manitoba wheat, pronounced by experts to be the best in the world, is grown.

Still, after all that the farmer can do, allowance must always be made in the North-West for a proportion of frozen wheat, though the quantity will decrease, as experience shows, with the cultivation of the country, the drainage of lands, and the increase of skill in farming. But the term "frozen wheat," which suggests to most minds the entire destruction of the crop as a merchantable commodity, means nothing like this to the North-Western

farmer. Slightly frosted wheat is reduced for flour-making purposes perhaps 30 per cent: in value, what is called frozen wheat 50 per cent. Both are freely used by millers to make a cheaper kind of flour. But many experiments have now proved that they are open to a much more profitable use. It is claimed that frozen wheat fed to pigs is worth from 60 to 80 cents per bushel, and that it makes excellent feed for all kinds of stock. In this fact lies one of the chief arguments for greater attention to mixed farming than has yet been given to it in the North-West. With pigs, cattle, and sheep around him the farmer could choose between selling his inferior wheat at a greatly-reduced price and turning it into pork, beef, butter, and other products, for which there are always a steady demand and good prices. In the production of pork, especially, it is claimed by good authorities that the opportunity is very great. The wheat-fed pork of the North-West may yet compete with the maize-fed pork of Chicago. So, too, in the case of poultry. With its abundance of refuse grain and large areas of stubble, no country ought to produce turkeys and other fowl more abundantly and cheaply.

But the North-Western farmer takes to mixed farming slowly and reluctantly. For this there is at present more than one reason. Labour is often scarce and expensive, and the attention to detail required in mixed farming is therefore rendered difficult. Fencing is necessary with a variety of stock, and fencing in some parts of the treeless prairie country is expensive. On the other hand, there is something of the temptation of gambling in wheat raising. With a good season, large crops, and a favourable price, the profits from a few hundred acres of wheat land are very large. As far as one could learn from rather extensive inquiry the production varies all the way from 15 to 40 bushels per acre, according to the nature of the soil and season. The price, too, has varied in different years from 55c. to \$1 per bushel for the best grade of grain. In such circumstances the temptation to speculate on the chances of the year is very great. As long, however, as the farmers of the North-West stake so much upon a single product, so long must they be prepared for great fluctuations of prosperity. Wheat, in sympathy with prices all over the world, has never been so low as during the last two years. I found many a farmer in Manitoba who was getting only 55c. a bushel for his wheat, paying at the same time high prices for pork, beef, butter, and other necessary articles of food, brought from Ontario and the United States. That this is bad farming, for which there can be no sufficient excuse, is a lesson which is being slowly but certainly learned. When it has been thoroughly learned—when mixed farming is the rule rather than the exception—I believe that the permanent prosperity of the North-Western farming interest is assured. This

was the opinion I found held by men with long experience of the country, such as Governor Schultz and Mr. Greenway, the Premier of Manitoba. The risk from frost, if faced with far-sighted energy, does not seem to me so great as the risk from drought in Australia—scarcely greater than the risk from a prolonged wet season in Great Britain. Hence I believe that this vast country will gradually be filled up with a prosperous farming population. The cold winter is not seriously dreaded by the people, and the other seasons give great climatic compensations. During the whole month of October, while I was going westward over the prairies, there was not a drop of rain, while the perfect sunshine which prevailed week after week furnished a striking contrast to the reports of storm and wet and cold which came from England. As I journeyed eastward some weeks later winter was settling down on the land, and at Winnipeg the thermometer had already been at 20deg. below zero. But there were the same bright sky and sunshine, and the clear cold seemed to give an added activity to people's steps and a buoyancy to their spirits

II.*

What was said in a previous article about the North-West had reference chiefly to the comparatively treeless prairie country which has hitherto been the principal area of wheat culture. It would be a great mistake, however, to suppose that North-Western Canada consists exclusively of level prairie. Westward from Manitoba along the Qu'Appelle, northward on the Saskatchewan, and all along the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains are vast regions of a partly wooded, partly grass-covered country, park-like in appearance, undulating for the most part, and with striking variations of scenery formed by the grouping of mountain, hill, lake, and river.

Country of this kind will always have for many settlers attractions which they do not find in the absolutely level prairie—attractions for which no richness of soil or ease of culture can compensate. Parts of these regions, while admirably suited for ranching, are, without irrigation, less fitted for agriculture. This is true of considerable districts in the vicinity of Calgary, where, however, the opportunities for irrigation are excellent, and only await the application of capital and skill. Other parts seem suited alike for grazing and agriculture. It is difficult to speak with anything short of enthusiasm of the appearance and apparent possibilities of one vast region which is now attracting much attention and to which a very considerable stream of settlers has already set in. The railway lately opened for a distance of about 200 miles from

Calgary to Edmonton gives easy access to one part of this country; the line between Regina and Prince Albert to another. Between these points and both north and south of the Saskatchewan are areas which nature seems to have specially adapted for that mixed farming which I have mentioned as being the most reliable and satisfactory. There are numerous streams, large and small, of excellent water. The nutritious native grasses, once the only food of millions of buffalo, naturally turn into good hay as they stand, and, as in the purely ranching districts, give winter as well as summer food to horses, which are accustomed to pawing away the snow, and to cattle as well, when the snow is not deep on the ground. Abundant shelter for cattle is furnished by the valleys and woodland bluffs, and the latter supply also material for fencing and fuel. Of other abundant fuel I shall have occasion to speak when considering the coal supplies of the Dominion.

In a drive over a northern portion of this territory, from Edmonton to St. Albert, I was struck with the signs of prosperity which followed even the careless farming of the half-breeds who have for some time occupied this district. Wide fields of wheat stubble, herds of sleek cattle in the fields, droves of fat pigs around the stacks of straw in the farm-yards, flocks of poultry, all told of plenty to support in comfort a people content to live chiefly on the produce of their own farms. I cannot but think that this whole range of country offers great and varied inducements to hardy settlers, and would yield a rich reward to those who brought industry and intelligence to the work of farming. It is sure to be filled ultimately with a prosperous population, whether the process of settlement goes on slowly or rapidly.

Of the extent of territory capable of successful settlement still further north, in the direction of the Peace River, no one as yet even attempts to form an estimate. There is already abundant evidence to show that the deep northward bend of the isothermal lines which occurs as we approach the Rocky Mountains upsets entirely all calculations based on the idea that latitude alone determines climate. How far this fact enlarges the supposed scope of agricultural settlement in Canada is one of the interesting problems of the future. Our present concern, however, is with lands actually in the process of settlement.

Turning from the farming to the grazing districts, we find that the ranching industry, in Alberta especially, has in a few years grown to large dimensions. It is carried on chiefly by the aid of English capital and under English direction. At Calgary I found an interesting experiment being carried out with a view of reaching distant markets rapidly and effectually. Large numbers of cattle from the Cochrane Ranch were being

killed in abattoirs at Calgary, and the chilled beef was being sent to the cities of Eastern Canada in cars specially arranged for the purpose. The meat was received at Montreal and Ottawa in perfect condition, competing successfully with the best that local markets could supply. It is claimed that, with improved transport arrangements, this is by far the best way in which to carry the products of the ranches to English markets as well. Some ardent believers in the system think that the scheduling of Canadian cattle, by compelling the use of new methods, may prove to the Canadian farmer a blessing in disguise. In 1872 Canada had exported no meat, live or dead, to Great Britain. The numbers of live cattle sent had already risen in 1891 beyond a hundred thousand annually, and yet this does not represent more than a fifth of what the British market absorbs. A special class of ships has been designed to meet the wants of this great trade, which has become a considerable factor in the prosperity of several British ports as well as Canadian, and in the success of steamship and railway systems. Horses have not as yet been exported in large numbers to Britain, but the stock on the ranches has increased rapidly, and the wants of the British market are now being carefully studied. Lately an experiment has been made in transferring numbers of choice horses from the ranches to Ontario farms, whence, after being thoroughly broken, they are brought to England for sale. That it only pays to bring to the English market horses of the best quality is a point now well understood.

The ranching of the North-West, like its farming, has had its entire development within the last ten years. Experience has been painfully acquired; the ranchman has had many fluctuations of prosperity, and has felt his way slowly towards success. The best accessible information indicates that the industry is now established on a permanent and fairly satisfactory basis. Between Western ranches and Eastern farms it seems clear Canada will more and more become a chief source of meat supply for the United Kingdom.

What has now been said shows to how great an extent the Canadian North-West depends upon its agricultural interests. Alike in the areas principally devoted to wheat culture, in those where from the first mixed farming predominates, and in the ranching districts, the present and prospective prosperity of the country will consist in finding an adequate market for a large surplus of food products. This broad fact should be kept constantly in mind, since it cannot but exercise a decisive influence on the future policy of the Dominion.

I have as yet said nothing about the towns of the North-West. These must always furnish some index to the general prosperity of the country around them. Winnipeg, as is well known, after springing up with wonder-

ful rapidity in the first years of settlement, suffered a violent reaction as the result of over-speculation in business and especially in real estate. The truth is that the inflow of farming population never matched the expectations of those who first went to Manitoba; the city increased in size beyond the necessities of the province, and so was compelled to wait some years for the latter to overtake it. Now the period of stagnation is past, and Winnipeg is making a steady and healthy growth. The constantly-increasing mileage of railway lines which centre at the city mark out for it an assured and large future. Brandon, too, is becoming a considerable railway centre; much building is going on, and the smaller town is anxious to secure from the railway companies the same advantages as a wholesale distributing point which Winnipeg now enjoys. From both Regina and Calgary railway systems extend north and south, and both have a prevailing air of substantial prosperity. I have before referred to the numerous small but flourishing towns which spring up along every new line of railway. None of these depends upon manufactures; all owe their existence to the increasing wealth of the surrounding agricultural country, and furnish the most conclusive proof of its producing capacity. One remark about all North-Western towns should not be omitted. In them life is as safe, property as secure, and the ordinary supremacy of law as complete as in the old towns of Eastern Canada, or in the country towns and villages of England and Scotland. This advantage over the western-towns of the United States the country owes in part to the greater slowness of growth which is so often complained of, and to the natural selection of population effected by a northern climate—partly no doubt to superiority of judicial and social institutions. It is no small thing that the North-West can offer to every immigrant all the social security to which he has been accustomed in the oldest communities.

A larger population is unquestionably the greatest need of the country. While, however, there is at present a strong popular demand for a vigorous immigration policy on the part of the Government, I have found that this demand is always qualified by the opinion that numbers should not be purchased at the expense of quality. Should restraints be placed upon undesirable immigration by the United States, Canada will scarcely welcome what her neighbours refuse. But there are strong reasons for thinking that the North-West has now gained a stage of development and established for itself a name which will draw to it a steady and sufficient inflow of the most desirable population.

What are the classes of settlers who succeed and seem best fitted for the North-West? On the whole one is inclined to describe it as essentially a country for the poor man or the man with a moderate amount of means.

Alberta, with its ranches, and some of the prairie districts, such as the Qu'Appelle Valley, with opportunities for farms on a large scale, furnish openings for the successful use of larger capital; but men who themselves work the land are what the country chiefly requires, and to them it will prove most satisfactory. Among these the advantage certainly lies with immigrants who have had some previous practical acquaintance with the farming conditions of the Canadian climate, or of a climate similar to it. They begin at once to make crops grow, which the unskilled immigrant rarely does. Settlers from the Eastern Provinces or from the more Northern States easily adapt themselves to the conditions of the country; so on the whole does the Scottish labourer. The English and Irish farm hand has less flexibility for change, but he, too, succeeds by dint of pluck and industry. Among foreigners the Icelander easily takes the first place, in virtue of his sobriety, industry, and frugality. The Scandinsvian does well, and the plodding German. The North-West will never be a congenial home for the Italian and other Latin races. These naturally gravitate towards the warm southern and middle portions of the United States or towards South America. I heard very grave doubts expressed about the success of one or two colonies of Russian Jews. The difficulty in this case was attributed to inherent disinclination to agricultural pursuits. It may have been quite as much due to the fact that as emigrants they had too much assistance. The experience of the North-West shows that extraordinary care is required to make a success of assisted emigration. I think that Lord Brassey has discussed in the columns of *The Times* the comparative failure of his efforts to make easy the path of the emigrant on the colonization estate in which he is concerned. He will be interested in knowing that many of the men who appear to have been discontented, if not idle, when receiving aid, have become comparatively successful when thrown entirely upon their own resources, and compelled to work their own way. This I learned on very good authority. The consideration of this point leads up to a larger question.

To speak broadly, it must be said that the young Englishman of the better classes sent out to the North-West to be a farmer is not a success. The consensus of opinion which I discovered among practical men upon this point was very striking, and the general statement is not disproved by many exceptions. The labouring man, coming from the Eastern Provinces or from the Old Country to the West with scarce a dollar, will in a few years be a fairly prosperous and contented settler, with a good farm and an increasing stock. The young Englishman, coming with the apparent advantage of some capital, and a quarterly or half-yearly remittance from home, at the end of the same time has not got nearly so

far—he has less land under cultivation, often he is in debt and more or less discontented, execrating the country, and preventing a more suitable class of emigrants from coming to it. Wellington thought that Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton. The public school life of the young Englishman develops qualities which make him a good soldier or sailor, but not a good farmer; it gives him the spirit and dash of the racer for physical labour, not the patient force of the draught horse. And, after all, the farmer must be the steady draught horse of the social system.

Often it is not the strongest fibre which is sent out from the better class of English homes, the market for all that is excellent being best at home. No greater mistake can be made by English parents than to think that a North-Western life may prove a corrective for tendencies to dissipation. The very opposite result flows naturally from the absence of social restraint. "Perfect devils to drink" was the description given by an Edmonton hotelkeeper of two young Englishmen who happened to be with him at the moment, and with money to spend furnished by a new remittance. "Rum-punch all the morning, then brandy and soda till 3 or 4, when they are paralyzed and have to sleep some hours, then whisky toddy till bed-time." And he offered to show them to us in his bar room in any of these stages of inebriation. An extreme case, no doubt, but pathetic enough to think of. A good deal of the loafing around hotels and bar rooms in the North-West is done by young Englishmen, and the term "remittance man" tends to become an expression of contempt. If these men must come out, let the extra ladies of the family come to exercise their better influence over them. They will be as well employed as in slumming or parish work at home, and they will be giving what the North-West wants—something of England's best to leaven social life. One never meets in the West an Englishwoman who is not a centre of wholesome and refining influence. It would, indeed, be a boon to the country if the same were true of every son of an English gentleman who goes to it. There are numbers, of course, who, according to their lights, are trying to do their best. But public school life in England creates a very strong desire to mingle sport with work in after life, and often with the prominence, on the whole, given to sport. Conditions in the North-West will not at present admit of thus mingling employment. It is the persistent worker who succeeds there. The remittance which is intended to help too often tends to weaken. In the North-West Mounted Police young Englishmen have done well. The military discipline and the life on horseback in the open air draw out their better qualities. So with ranching and with work on sheep and cattle stations in other parts of the Empire. What I have said applies chiefly to farming.

One has no compunction in pointing out instances of failure. It is well that parents should be warned of what their children must confront when they go abroad, and it is equally right that any unsatisfactory form of emigration to the North-West should be checked. Perhaps, too, perfect frankness of discussion about the actual position of affairs may do something to prevent misconceptions and to remedy mistakes.

To another matter reference should be made in this connexion. The system of paying large premiums for the instruction of youths in farming or ranching is utterly discredited among practical men in Canada. —Occasionally the plan may work well, but it is open to grave abuses. Labour of all kinds has its cash value on Canadian farms. The best possible means by which a young man can test his suitability for the life and become competent is to hire out as a labourer with a Canadian farmer for a year or two, depending entirely upon his wages for his support. If he passes this test successfully he is fit for the life of the country. If the work proves too severe, the experiment has not at least been an expensive one, and he can select some other outlet for his energies. At the end of his period of service the money that would have been paid in premiums or thrown away in lightly-spent remittances will be sufficient to give him a good start in a sphere for which he has been prepared by hard but necessary experience. There is a good deal to be said in favour of gaining this elementary experience in the older communities of the Eastern Provinces before he faces the rougher life of the West. This must be determined by circumstances. Arrangements can often be made through friends or emigration offices with substantial farmers to give employment to young men, at first for their board and later for wages, which increase with their earning capacity. The latter point is easily settled justly by the *employé* holding himself free to find a better market for his labour if he can. Sending out young men with capital, but without experience and settled characters, is practically to invite the attentions of those who are always ready to plunder or lead astray the weak and unsophisticated.

In addition to the settlers from the older provinces of the Dominion, and from England, Ireland, and Scotland, there are being formed at some points in the North-West a curious variety of small colonies of different nationalities, mostly northern—Danes, Swedes, Norwegians, Belgians, Bavarians, Alsatians, Icelanders, and many others. A small band of settlers comes at first under some special impulse, and gradually attracts to itself recruits from the home centre. The numbers are sufficient to give a degree of cohesion to these small communities and some vitality to the languages they speak. A more complete intermixture with the prevailing English-speaking population would facilitate the work of assimilation.

On the other hand, the emigrant finds himself at once among friends, and so does not feel so keenly the change from the old to the new land. It is difficult as yet to judge how far this method of settlement will extend. It can in any case only temporarily lengthen out the process of amalgamation.

A new and highly interesting factor has lately appeared in the settlement of the North-West. The United States have become an important recruiting ground for immigrants. In the Eastern Provinces I had heard of a movement northward from the Western States towards the Alberta and Saskatchewan districts. On inquiry at the land office at Winnipeg I was shown long lists of receipts for first payments on lands in the Prince Albert districts made by farmers in Dakota, Nebraska, Washington, and even as far south as Kansas. These men had already moved into the country, or were preparing to do so in the coming spring. At Calgary a more striking proof of the reality of the movement was thrust upon me. In going northward to Edmonton I found myself spending a not very comfortable, but highly interesting, day in a train packed with emigrants, men, women, and children, most of whom were removing from a single district in the State of Washington to the banks of the Saskatchewan. I learned that the northward trains from Calgary for some time before had been crowded in a like way.

In conversation with the immigrants it was easy to discover the explanation of this new and unexpected movement of population. "Land is getting to be land on this continent," one of them remarked to me in Western idiom. The rush into a newly-opened district, such as that which took place at Oklahoma a few years ago, illustrates the extent to which land hunger is already felt in the United States. Guided by an instinct almost like that which directed the buffalo to the fertile feeding grounds of the Saskatchewan, the tide of population which filled up the older Western States and flowed on to the less fertile regions of Dakota, or to the mountain districts with their limited farming lands, seems now to have taken a bend northward. If the expectations of its pioneers are fulfilled, it seems probable that this movement will become very considerable during the next few years. My latest information shows that it was kept up through the spring and summer of the year which has just ended. These immigrants are of a class which the North-West most of all wants. Many are Canadians returning after trying their fortunes in the United States. Most seemed to be bringing with them money, horses, cattle, and household equipment. Best of all, they bring skill in pioneering work and acquaintance with its conditions, in these points having an infinite superiority over the emigrant direct from Europe. It was striking to observe the confidence and reliance upon their own

resources with which these men, accompanied by their wives and children, faced the task of finding homes for themselves north of the Saskatchewan in the months of October and November, when the long, severe winter was all before them. They were doing it in order to be ready for a good spring's work.

Once more, in Southern Alberta I found that a group of Mormons—an offshoot from Salt Lake—had purchased to the south and east of Lethbridge more than 500,000 acres of land from the Alberta Coal and Mining Company. About 500 settlers have already entered this country, and preparations are being made for a continued influx from Utah, where land has become scarce. Other immigrants are freely accepted, as there is not, I believe, any wish to form a distinct Mormon colony. The capitalists who have undertaken this enterprise expect to repeat here the process of irrigation by which the Salt Lake Valley was changed from a semi-desert to a richly productive country. It is proposed to divert the waters of the St. Mary's river through a canal which will make a large area as well suited for agricultural as it now is for pastoral purposes.

The North-West is thus being approached from various points, and by many classes of immigrants. A great rush of population, such as marked the settlement of some of the Western States, is neither to be expected nor desired. But everything now points to a steady and healthy growth, such as is required for the fuller consolidation of the Dominion.

A study of North-Western Canada enables one to understand the main conditions of the rivalry in production going on between the wheat grower at home and the wheat grower abroad. The North-Western farmer has first of all cheap land of his own, worked by machinery with singular ease, and with a store of natural fertility which is only exhausted after many years of continuous cropping. If he takes up a Government homestead his land costs him little more than the expense of survey. Even if he buys it from a railway or land company, it has not cost him in the first year, when ready for seed, more per acre than the yearly rent of wheat land in England. His invested capital is therefore very small. This is his first and great advantage. Against this must be put the fact that he is far from the market which the English farmer has almost at his door. It costs from 30c. to 40c. a bushel to carry wheat from Winnipeg to Liverpool or London. While the wide, level stretches of prairie offer great facilities for the use of labour-saving agricultural machinery, still for any extra labour required there a high price must be paid.

The English farmer, on the other hand, has cheap capital and cheap labour, and he lives in a country where all manufactured goods are cheap. In direct taxes he pays more, in indirect less than the

Canadian. The contest is more nicely balanced than is generally supposed. Agricultural depression is felt at times in the new land as well as in the old. Superior energy or skill may incline the advantage one way or the other, or the chance of the season. A lowering of rents may give it to the Englishman; a lowering of duties to the Canadian. The cheapening of transportation both by land and sea will have much to do with the question in the future. When the exhaustion of his lands compels the farmer abroad to use fertilizers, the balance of advantage will again be shifted. The area of abundant wheat production has during the last 40 years moved steadily westward in America from New York State through Ohio, Iowa, and Illinois to Kansas; then northward through Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Dakota to the Canadian North-West, and there the European farmer will have his last keen competition with a rich virgin soil.

As with wheat, so with cattle and horses. For the lease of his broad pastures in the grazing country, the ranchman pays but a trifling sum. During the whole summer his stock feeds upon grass of the most nutritious kind, raised without any expense for fertilizers or culture. During the greater part of the winter it feeds upon hay cured where it stands in the fields, without any expense for being cut. But the ranchman, again, is distant from his market, and the fatigues and risks of long transportation for his cattle weigh heavily against him. Neither in wheat nor in cattle has there been much profit during the past two seasons for the man of the North-West. I doubt, however, whether agricultural depression or the failure of crops ever presses so closely or severely upon the Canadian as upon the English farmer. The latter has his rent to pay whatever happens. The former reduces his expenses, and, owning his land and having little demand upon him for ready cash, tides over a crisis more easily.

LEADING ARTICLE FROM THE TIMES, JANUARY 31, 1894.

Yesterday we published the first of a series of letters upon Canada, and to-day we publish the second, which completes what the writer has to say about the North-West as an agricultural territory. Though much has already been said and written upon this subject, much also has been forgotten, or has become obsolete through rapid changes of conditions. In any case, it cannot but be of interest to various classes in this country to hear what are the impressions of that great region carried away by a competent and perfectly independent observer, who has seen things as they are at the moment. One of the absorbing preoccupations of the middle classes in this country is to find careers for their sons, and the difficulty is not always unfelt in the case of daughters. Working men are, perhaps, too much enamoured of the new political economy, which teaches that cost of

production governs prices, while trade unions can govern cost of production, to be disposed to bestow much thought upon emigration. Yet it must have dawned upon many of them that, whatever truth there may be in this theory, it is a truth far too remote to be worth considering, in view of the present certainty that, if Germans choose to underbid them in the labour market, Germans will get employment while they stand idle. To such it cannot but be interesting to learn that competence, and even wealth, is at the command of men starting without capital, and willing to go through a short training on the spot, for which their daily work will be taken as an equivalent. Capitalists who can afford to wait for returns cannot fail to perceive the immense future that lies before investors in a country that is rapidly filling up with immigrants from all parts of the world, a country, too, in which property and life are as secure as in any English town or village. For those who take larger views and concern themselves with the well-being and expansion of the Empire handed down to us by our forefathers, the development of Canada opens up questions of the deepest interest. The destiny of the Dominion is by no means so manifest as is sometimes assumed. If Canada is in contact for thousands of miles with the United States, she is no less in contact equally real with Europe on one hand and Asia on the other. For a long time to come her principal markets for agricultural produce will be reached by sea. That does not prevent her from importing goods from the United States, but it does prevent the establishment with them of the exclusive commercial relations and sympathies which some would have us accept as inevitable. Great issues are trembling in a balance heavily weighted in either scale, and it will largely depend upon the course of events in other parts of the Empire, in particular upon the policy pursued voluntarily or of necessity by the United Kingdom, whether the beam ultimately dips on one side or the other.

From the point of view of the individual, the North-West, as clearly appears from our Correspondent's account, is a land of personal effort. The man who can do a good day's work, and is willing to do it, finds himself in request from the first. If his muscles are supplemented by a modicum of brains, he has no difficulty in mastering the conditions of successful cultivation. As soon as he has done this he can become the possessor of land in fee-simple for less than it would fetch at a yearly rent in England. He needs very little capital, and for a pound an acre he can break up the virgin prairie and obtain a farm yielding crops for many years in succession without signs of exhaustion. Our Correspondent cites cases of men beginning with nothing and going into partnership with farmers already established, who in five or six years are the possessors of several thousands of pounds. The conditions are simple, but they must

be rigorously observed, and experience shows that the men who succeed best are those who rely solely upon themselves. Remittances from home are a snare, and the assisted emigrant is handicapped in the race. This is worth noting in connexion with the attempts now made in some quarters to take the unemployed from our towns, plant them on experimental farms, and finally dry-nurse them out to the North-West or elsewhere. They must learn their farming on the spot, and if the right stuff is in them they need no further assistance than their passage-money. To the much-enduring British farmer it may seem that there is little comfort in the news that men are pouring in from the eastern provinces, from the western regions of the United States, from Iceland, from Utah, and, in fact, from all the world, to cover these fertile prairies with wheat and to stock the rolling pastures with cattle and horses. Yet in this migration he may see the beginning of the end of the crushing competition of the New World. The North-West is the last great expanse of virgin land, and when that is fairly filled up there will be an end of wheat for nothing. Crops will require manure, careful husbandry, and a mode of farming in many ways more expensive than that now in vogue. The margin in favour of the Canadian grower is not so very large if everything be taken into account, and it is easy to see, as our Correspondent points out, that circumstances tend to reduce it.

There is however, nothing in all this to reduce the intrinsic prosperity of the North-West. At present the energies of the settlers are mainly given to wheat growing. It is easy, it calls for less labour and less supervision than mixed farming, and the produce is easily handled and transported. The produce of mixed farming demands nearer markets, or far more elaborate appliances to put it upon distant ones. As population grows all the demands of civilization will have to be met on the spot, and the energy now almost exclusively devoted to exportable produce will necessarily be largely diverted into other channels. That process would be greatly hastened by the immigration of women, for whom, we gather, there is, in Canada as in Australia, a very large field of usefulness. A woman who is not afraid of household work, and is not too ignorant and slovenly to do it fairly well, has probably at least as good a chance of rapid rise to comfort, if not wealth, as the most energetic man. Yet it is probably only to women bred in the country that it is of any use to point out these possibilities, since to the town-bred ones the life seems repulsive and even intolerable. For those of either sex who do not care for Canada, yet seek some outlet, it is evident that the old home of the Matabele has many advantages. These warriors seem to have an excellent eye for fertile soil, and the account of their "old home" given by a Correspondent in our columns to-day might well tempt even a fastidious cultivator.

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